

9 Miraculous Benefits Of Chia Seeds

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Chia [seeds](#) impart many health benefits, which include [skin](#) care, weight [loss](#), lowering [cholesterol levels](#), protecting the [heart](#) health, controlling [diabetes](#), and improving the digestive system. Also, they help in controlling hypertension, preventing [osteoporosis](#) and [arthritis](#), treating [cancer](#), and aiding in pregnancy. Chia seeds give a great energy boost to athletes around the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [What are Chia Seeds?](#)
- [Chia Seeds Nutrition Facts](#)
- [Health Benefits of Chia Seeds](#)
 - [Prevent Heart Diseases](#)
 - [Skin Care](#)
 - [Boost Digestive Health](#)
 - [Control Diabetes](#)
 - [Prevent Osteoporosis](#)

- Weight Control
- Prevent Fatigue
- Control Hypertension
- Prevent Arthritis
- Treat Cancer
- Aid in Pregnancy
- How to eat Chia Seeds?
- Side Effects of Chia Seeds
- References
- Comments

What Are Chia Seeds?

Chia seeds come from the flowering plant of chia, which is native to Mexico and Guatemala. The scientific names of the plant are *Salvia hispanica* and *Salvia columbariae*, which is also called ‘golden chia’. Both of these belong to the [mint](#) family (*Lamiaceae*). Chia seeds look [similar](#) to [sesame seeds](#).

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The chia plant had been cultivated by the Aztecs, Mayans, Incans, and other tribes for a very long time. Originally ‘chia’ meant ‘strength’ in the Mayan language. It was, therefore, a staple food for them and historians considered it an important plant and food source for Native Americans. With the fall of the Aztecs and the general decline of the native population in the North American region, the use of chia seeds also declined.

By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, wheat and corn had replaced chia seeds as the crop of choice. This change in the staple food can be attributed to the travelers from Europe colonizing the New World and bringing forth their food grains like wheat, rice, corn, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.



The general preference of food changed over the years. Chia seeds had been forgotten for a long time until recently. The beginning of the 20th century saw a revival of chia seeds as more and more people started knowing about their benefits.

Chia Seeds Nutrition Facts

According to [USDA](#), 100 grams of chia seeds contain no cholesterol, 486 kcal of energy, 16 grams of protein, 30 grams of fat, 43 grams of carbohydrates, and 37 grams of dietary [fiber](#). They also have 630 mg of [calcium](#), 948 mg of [phosphorus](#), 160 mg of [potassium](#), 19 mg of [sodium](#), and 3.5 mg of [zinc](#). Chia seeds are also rich in [vitamins](#) such as [vitamin C](#), thiamin, [riboflavin](#), [niacin](#), and [vitamin E](#).

Chia seeds are a good source of antioxidants as well. The antioxidants present in chia seeds include flavonol glycosides, chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, kaempferol, [quercetin](#), myricetin, and linolenic acid. These

antioxidants help in curbing the levels of free radicals in the body. They [reportedly](#) also contain very high [concentrations](#) of omega-3 fatty acids that have many benefits.



Health Benefits Of Chia Seeds

Chia seeds with so many nutrients help in treating many conditions, some of which are mentioned below.

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Prevent Heart Diseases

[Studies](#) show that consumption of chia seeds increased HDL or good cholesterol levels but decreased the total cholesterol levels simultaneously. Chia seeds are [considered](#) as a heart-friendly food. The reason is that they are the richest source of omega-3 fatty acids and alpha-linolenic acid in the vegetarian world. Omega-3 fatty acids are the good fats (HDL cholesterol) that protect the heart and prevent the onset of heart diseases by reducing the levels of omega-6 fatty acids (LDL cholesterol) and maintaining a [stress](#)-free cardiovascular system.

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Skin Care

With a high antioxidant capacity, chia seeds can repair skin cells and [prevent further](#) damage. The [omega 3 fatty acids](#) help in maintaining moisture levels in the skin, prevent dryness, delay aging and the appearance of wrinkles. Chia seeds, because of their inflammatory properties, are also used to treat acne.

Boost Digestive Health

The high dietary fiber [content](#) in chia seeds is good for regulating bowel movements and it also helps to keep up your overall gastrointestinal health. Also after consumption, these seeds create a gel-like substance in the stomach which acts as a prebiotic and supports the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut. Chia seeds make you feel full for longer, thereby reducing your urge to overeat.

Control Diabetes

The starches and carbohydrates present in chia seeds are released slowly in comparison to conventional foods and are, therefore, [ideal for type 2 diabetics](#) as blood [sugar](#) level would not surge soon after having meals. A slower release of sugars into the bloodstream can aid in the optimum absorption of these sugars by each of the cells in the body. Hence, it is believed that the need for insulin diminishes with chia seeds.

Health Benefits of Chia Seed

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Nutrients*

Dietary Fiber 151%
Fat 47%
Protein 31%
Calories 24%

Minerals*

Manganese 108%
Phosphorus 95%
Calcium 63%
Zinc 23%

Aids in managing diabetes

Beneficial in managing weight

Helps in controlling arthritis, age-related dementia and fatigue

Aids in controlling hypertension

Strengthens bone and dental health

Rich in anti-inflammatory properties

Aids in improving gastrointestinal health

Lowers bad cholesterol levels and prevents heart diseases

Helps to prevent osteoporosis and joint weakness

Rich in omega-3 fatty acids which help to enable many bodily functions

*% Daily Value per 100g. For e.g. 100g of chia seeds (dried) provide 95% of daily requirement of phosphorus

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Prevent Osteoporosis

The amount of calcium found in chia seeds is considered to be higher than what is found in skimmed [milk](#). These seeds also contain [boron](#). It helps to metabolize calcium, which is needed for improved bodily functions and for bone health, helping to prevent osteoporosis, joint weakness, and general body flexibility.

Dental Health

Having a handful of chia seeds daily is recommended to eliminate dental issues. Chia seeds, being rich in calcium, phosphorus, and zinc, are amazing for the teeth. They keep the teeth healthy, eliminate [bad breath](#), and help in overall oral care.

Improve Athletes Performance

Chia seeds [drink](#) can prove to be a great energy drink that boosts energy without contributing to any unhealthy sugar levels. Athletes around the world agree with these claims as they use chia seeds to get a quick health boost to their energy levels. Apparently, you can also see a boost in your [metabolism](#) by consuming these ‘[superfoods](#)’ or more appropriately ‘superseeds’.

Weight Control

The nutrients in chia seeds can play a significant role in keeping a person’s weight under control in the long run. Also, the fact that these seeds control the appetite, makes it easier for overweight people to stick

to their goals and the lean ones to maintain their shape.

Prevent Fatigue

Chia seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, apart from certain types of fish. They help in controlling age-related [dementia](#), and fatigue, among other conditions.

Control Hypertension

The regular consumption of chia seeds is found to have a similar impact as regular medications for high blood pressure. Studies showed that chia seeds controlled systolic blood pressure by 6 ± 4 points. It also attenuates emerging and major cardiovascular risk factors in people with controlled type 2 diabetes.

Prevent Arthritis

Chia seeds have high levels of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which can be easily converted into omega-3 fatty acids to act as an ideal inflammation controller. These fatty acids control inflammation in the joints and arteries. It is estimated that a daily intake of about 4 grams of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) is enough to prevent arthritis.

Treat Cancer

Chia seeds are long known for their anti-cancer benefits. The omega 3 acids in chia seeds have shown a great potential in inhibiting the cancer cell growth in cervical and [breast cancers](#).

Aid in Pregnancy

Considered an ideal food for pregnant women, chia seeds can aid in the baby's brain development, replenish all the lost nutrients, and increase the energy levels. Fish being a great source of omega 3, sometimes can threaten the unborn baby's health with high mercury levels. So chia seeds are a safe option for all the mothers-to-be! Also, these seeds keep the blood sugar levels under control and help prevent conditions like high birth weight in the baby, C-section delivery, and preeclampsia.

How To Eat Chia Seeds?

- Chia seeds can be soaked in a glass of water and consumed the next morning with breakfast.
- Water-soaked chia seeds can be added to cakes or cookies to eliminate the use of [butter](#). Eating sprouted chia seeds can also be very beneficial.
- They can be added to various drinks, juices, protein shakes, and milkshakes as a healthy component.
- Chia seeds can also be sprinkled on various foods in your breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

- They can be added to [eggs](#) to make a healthy omelet or to salads as a dressing.
- Add a handful of chia seeds to milk and boil the mixture for some time to have a healthy porridge.
- Chia seeds can be ground up and the powder can be added to flour, milk, and [yogurts](#).
- Chia seeds can be added to stews as a thickening agent.

Side Effects Of Chia Seeds

- **Allergies:** Chia seeds may cause rashes, hives, vomiting, and [diarrhea](#). Also, cross-reactions exist between chia and closely related foods like [oregano](#), sesame, and [mustard](#).
 - **Digestive Issues:** If eaten in excess, chia seeds cause stomach issues in some people. This effect is because of the high fiber content in the seeds.
 - **Cancer:** There are controversial studies regarding chia seeds' effect on cancer, which say that the seeds increase the risk of [prostate cancer](#). Consult your doctor before consuming the seeds.
 - **Blood Pressure:** Chia seeds are known to treat hypertension as they act as blood thinners. So people taking medications for high blood pressure should avoid the intake of these seeds as there is a risk of hypotension.
-

EDITOR'S PICK



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Chia Seeds as Poultry Fodder

Recently, a study conducted by Ayerza et al. on poultry suggested that feeding animals with chia seeds as fodder would be better. An increased intake of omega-3 fatty acids in animals would also benefit the people who would eventually consume the [meat](#) of such animals.

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References

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T [Tania](#)

🕒 2:17 pm December 3, 2015

I find chia seeds to be great in oatmeal and in a mango-banana smoothie. yum!



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N [Natalia Ramirez](#)

🕒 3:26 am November 8, 2012

Love learning about healthy eating!



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